

Campfire Stories #1:The Impersonator

by DeathGrip

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Summary: Jenni is just a Merliz war lance, right? (Part One of four)

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Cassie gulped air and raced through the woods. Faster and faster. She couldn't stop running. But then, she wasn't running. She wasn't thinking. She wasn't feeling anything. Visions of the past week swam through her head. Red, mostly. Blood red. Rachel's parents, sisters, Rachel. Ax. Tobias. Everyone. Well, not everyone. Cassie felt someone grab her and swing her around. She fell, sobbing, the strong pair of arms that had grabbed her the only things keeping her from falling to the ground. "Cassie...crying's not going to bring them back," Amber said, not in much better shape herself. Cassie wiped her eyes and looked up, balancing herself on uneven legs. Mental slap. "Thanks. I needed that," she said, almost whispering. "I needed one, too," Amber commented, opening her backpack and pulling an apple out. She handed it to Cassie, who bit it. Amber guided her west, and from the pace she set their destination was a ways away. "Jenni? Easha?" she asked. "I need to report the deaths of Jenni Jarit and Easha- Disnial-Conate immediately," she said stiffly. That was Amber's way of avoiding emotion, treating it with formality. She could almost be unfeeling, but then, she'd been dealt more death than anyone else. "As soon as I get over it," she finished, tears running down her cheeks. If anything, Easha, the Andalite female War-Prince, had been so much like Amber they had frequently broke out in the same sentences. Jenni, the wolf like Merliz as tall as Cassie, twice as long nose to tail, with a wing span big enough to cover the moon (not literally), and saber teeth that dragged to the ground when she was using them, and claws like a cat, and the blood red, piercing eyes, the black black black fur that was called 'space shadow' by her people, frosting silver when light hid it, and white white white wings dubbed 'silver nova', she was a familiar and reassuring sight. By herself more often, true, but she always had a comment or suggestion, or a bit of rye humor to mark any conversation. The Galshak of the Amarnment Gravday, she'd certainly earned the post. (Note: she was the captain of the Merliz Battlecruiser Gravday) And it was a sad

thing to see her go, but the ship was a definite savior. They reached the ship, hidden in a scrap pile of Yeerk ships, almost buried. Amber, Easha, the two were geniuses repairing those things. Together they could make a near scrap bug fighter work, and since they were lodged near the area with the older versions of ships, they could fly the ones they finished into the woods nearby. They had almost a whole Merliz fleet-over a hundred. Easha, Jenni, and Amber had fitted them with automatic codes for any planet. Simple rule: the ship has the code, it lands. Period. Suddenly, Jake, Rachel, Tobias, Marco, Jenni, and Easha clambered out. "How?" Cassie stammered, staring at Amber, who chuckled. "You need to aim when you shoot, Cassie," she grinned. "Eash and Jenn, I had no idea about. I didn't know Jenni had a holographic emitter!" she started laughing insanely, tears running down her cheeks. Cassie didn't join in. "Ax?" "Trying to find a Z-space emitter for an Andalite fighter he's trying to build. To fit with Eash's." She sighed and came back to business. She set down the dozen bags Cassie had failed to notice. "Supplies?" Rachel asked, helping her take them in the ship. Amber laughed. "Found a grocery store still in operating condition not far from here. Put everything in refrigeration-hurry. It's a couple miles, out in the middle of nowhere, but there's fresh food and we need all we can get." Jake nodded and dumped everything in the refrigerated storage (a good area of shelves) and handed them all the sacks and cases they had. Amber stuck them all in a bug fighter and everyone else hoped in one too. They did a sweep and came back with everything edible. Even dog food, but then, they could get desperate soon. Amber looked around. "Okay, I'll go hunt for some more. Be back tonight."

They were all sitting in a shelter with a fire going in the center. Waste not, want not. Merliz always use hydrogen (the gas space is highly composed of) as fuel, and we had only enough in our atmosphere to keep the fridge running and take off. All the other ships had that technology added to them, and they were small enough to do more on less fuel. "Who has a campfire story for tonight?" Jake asked. "< I have one, >" Jenni said quickly, slightly hesitant. "< OK, shoot, >" Easha said. "< This is a story that detours along the lines of Merliz, and around my life. I should warn you, it's long, and nothing to go to sleep by. >" With that warning, she started.

The Yeerks were unleashed on the Galaxy. They spread like some evil disease. Merliz and Andalite had, before this little dilemma, joined forces to make peace with them. Electrolite, hah. They didn't listen to Merliz. The Dalak, or their own guts. Yeerks have always hated Merliz. More than Andalites. Maybe it's our physical prowess, our intelligence, or maybe, because we didn't assume a kind pose with a hint of aggression. We were all out hatred. I was not a Merliz then, I was an Andalite female. Darafla- Latrai-Colungath. Seerow's fosterling. Years later, I was sent to the Hork-Bajir world with them. The struggle followed with my banishment from all things Andalite. I stole a Yeerk bug fighter, remaining on the planet till the end. Until there was nothing, not even Dak and Aldrea. So I went to the Merliz Homeworld, aquired, killed, and morphed a fearful Merliz pup. Her name was Jenni Jarit. She is me, as I'm know a nothlit. From here I will continue the story a little more detailed. Jenni was sunning myself on the top branches of her favorite tree, a flat topped Nimbarg. Her family's home (a hollow Zait tree with cover on the top, a rock walled storage burrow underneath, and an entrance as high as the tree, which was covered with moss and vines instead of leaves) stretching her white wings with youthful, adolescent

energy,her frosted space shadow black fur russling silver and warming her usefully,as it hid her when her father took them hunting in their large portion of tropical land on the Merliz World Niamth IX.She saw a wing of sweeper vehicles through the air,starling the young female into her parents(Jeddar Jarit and Shenni Nitar)tiern,shutting the door behind her,her saber teeth sheathed(like a cobra) and her body streamlined for speed.She was not a slow bugger,either.Having gone through the entrance and slamming the door,she dove to storage,opening a hidden door to a tunnel to an exit through the falls.She raced through,forcing herself to shrink as small as she could as she fell into the water. Once she was in,she enlarged herself to her normal size(she couldn't get larger than her natural length and height untill adulthood)and hid behind the falls.She saw her parents,returning from a hunting trip,bound and hussled onto the sweepers.Her eyes,a deep red even when she was in good spirits,darkened until her entire eye was as black as her fur.The sweepers disappeared moments later,and she leapt out of the water at a good flying speed.Despite a young Merliz body,a lightning quick Andalite mind was in her head,and it took no thought to realize that her father had been hussled off to the military,her mother a slave to a wealthier family. "< Lucky, >"she muttered to herself about herself. The land was in her name,she knew,so she was safe,for now. But when she was old enough,the military would be her home.And she'd kill every Yeerk in the Galaxy if she needed to to get them back for what they did,done,were doing to her.

Years passed.She heard of the attack/raid on the Andalite HomeWorld,and gave it only a grunt of aknowledgement. She would have paid more attention had she known that the victims had been her parents,little brother,and sister.She did hear,later on,that the youngest daughter of the family had survived.Easha-Disnial-Conate.This stopped Jenni dead in her tracks,because her mother's middle name had been Conate.Her father's had been Latrai. She found out after her younger brother and herself had been banished,her parents had been allowed another pair of children.The elder was a male,the younger a female. She informed her younger brother,the only being who knew where,what,and who she was,to keep her up to date on Andalite activity.Jenni was a prominent Merliz War Lance, a high rank,and the first of three females to join the military.Soon she could be called the only one.She was a prominent pilot,and soon gained the knowledge of Easha's successsion to the military,already switching ships to find someone to instruct her in clash tailfighting.At this a laugh came out of her.The One in the legacy?Yes, most certainly it was her.Soon,some upgrades were held and Jenni had gained an offer-being a captain.She turned it down.She and Easha met each other in a battle.The Andalite dome ship had called for help,and the only ones within range was Jenni's fleet of fifty fighters,the Shanark Halzaili,or Space Sharks.After a definate pull of moves she noticed a specially designed Andalite fighter that could match hers plate for plate as a class one.After the battle her fleet was allowed docking on the ship for repairs and offered to stay with them until they could get posted new warriors for the ones they'd lost.After a meeting with her men,and a look at their supplies,they agreed to stay on as long as nessicary,but they would have to be at the next Merliz report station within three months for resupplying and a report.They laid out terms, and that was how they came to be under the jurisdiction of two militaries.Jenni's ability to change her size stood her in good stead,the quarters were much smaller than she could fit in as an adult.The ones that could change their shape handled the bridge more often than not, for there were

two ways to communicate as a Merliz: snarling, growling, and barking out in harsh, uninflictive Merlizn, or half heard, half thought spoke Galard, which Andalites had no trouble understanding. Eahsa and Jenni, both about the same age, banged into each other in the hallway, the awkward start of a close, close friendship. The two were much alike in their views on anything, except for one: Jenni had never met a single male figure that she enjoyed the company of. Eahsa had a sweetheart, of sorts. It wasn't so much romance between them though, because she hadn't seen him in a few years. His name was Elfangor, and when he did show up again in the last of Jenni's nine months there, they didn't get along. It was more of a "I need you as an alli. I don't hate you" than a "you are my only friend, I will defend you with my life". How Easha and Elfangor wound up as sweethearts she had no idea, the two were very different. Easha was far more mature and much less moralizing. But she didn't argue. Many, many years later, Jenni's fleet and a new dome ship, the GalaxyTree, with Easha and Elfangor, and a battle followed. At the end, she saw Elfangor's spinning into the planet's atmosphere. Easha's ran into overburn and lost power. Jenni thought fast, and magnetized her and Easha's hulls, dragging them into Z-Space. Once they were at a space station, the only two (so they thought) survivors of that battle, Jenni had accepted a promotion to a captain and designed an amarnment-the Gravday. And she went back to Earth. "< So here I am, >" she finished. Easha looked at her. then she smiled. < Why couldn't I tell? > "< Because I didn't want you to know. >" Jake shook his head. "Wow." "Now you're going to destroy Andalites?" Rachel grinned mischeviously. "< I have nothing against Andalites. Just the Electorite. >" "Takes planning, but doable," Marco muttered. Cassie was sobbing in the background. Ax and Tobias solemnly said nothing. "Ever hear of your parents?" Amber asked, dousing the fire. A heavy silence rang through the air. "< My mother was killed, and my father was slaughtered for treason, a crime he never committed, >" she said flatly. < We'll finish this campfire story, another day, > Tobias stated. < There's always another day. > "Yes," Amber agreed. We have to sleep, then we'll finish it. Another day."

End
file.